

Amherst Budget Coordinating Group Summary Points – January 28, 2010

At our January 28th meeting, the members of the Budget Coordinating Group agreed that the following points would be conveyed to our home boards and committees:

- That BCG members agree that proportional distribution of the \$1.1 million realized by a projected State Aid cut of 5% rather than 10% is fair. That allows for restorations of the highest priorities on each cut list, totaling approximately \$360,000 for the Town, \$400,000 for the Elementary Schools, \$250,000 for the Regional Schools assessment (Amherst share of a potential \$400,000 increase to their budget), and \$29,000 for the Libraries.
- That BCG members agree to not pursue an override amount totaling more than \$1.9 million; current plans for approximate maximum distributions are as follows: \$537,000 for the Town; \$176,000 for the Elementary Schools; \$1.1 million for the Regional Schools assessment (Amherst share of a potential \$1.4 million increase to their budget with the potential to combine and reallocate the Elementary and Regional dollars, if those School Committees express that desire;) and \$88,000 for the Libraries.
- That the timing requirements for the Annual Town Election ballot necessitate making recommendations about a total dollar amount and how those dollars would be distributed even as significant budget uncertainties remain. As such, the BCG emphasizes the following:
 - An override would determine a maximum amount of potential spending; it does not require that the maximum amount be requested or appropriated;
 - If additional unions agree to COLA concessions, thus decreasing the cost of the recommended restorations, that amount would be: a) deducted from the requested override amount, if the agreement occurs before the ballot language is finalized February 12th; or b) reflected in the budgets recommended to Town Meeting: we would recommend not taxing to the full levy limit authorized by the override, rather than seeking to spend the COLA savings on additional restorations.
 - If FY11 State Aid is more than projected, that difference would be reflected in the budgets recommended to Town Meeting: we would recommend not taxing to the full levy limit authorized by the override, rather than seeking to spend that additional State Aid on additional restorations.
 - If Elementary and Regional School budgets ultimately seek fewer restorations than recommended by the Superintendent at this time, then that difference would be reflected in the budgets recommended to Town Meeting: we would recommend not taxing to the full levy limit authorized by the override, rather than seeking to spend that savings on additional restorations.
 - Town Meeting has appropriating authority, but budget managers would not seek additional restorations that would “spend” the savings from these areas.

- That in order for BCG to recommend override language to the Select Board that includes distributions for the Elementary and Regional Schools, and the Libraries, a vote to support those distributions by those respective elected bodies is necessary. Without such support, it would not make sense to include any request for override funds on their behalf.